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The Polychrome Lion recently found in Babylon.—By Dr.
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ABOUT fifty miles south of Baghdâd, in the neighborhood of the town of Hillah on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, are the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon, a series of extensive, irregularly shaped mounds, covering from north to south a distance of about five miles. The most prominent among these mounds are Bâbîl, El-Kasr (القصر), and Tell-‘Amrân-ibn-Alî.

Since Claudius James Rich, resident of the English East India Company at Baghdâd, published in 1812 his valuable memoir on the ruins of Babylon, in the *Wiener Fundgruben des Morgenlands*, these *tells* have been visited by travelers and explorers, among others by Sir Austen Henry Layard (1850), the French expedition under Fulgence Fresnel and Jules Oppert (1851–1854), Sir Henry Rawlinson, accompanied by William K. Loftus and J. E. Taylor (1849–1855), George Smith (1874), and Hormuzd Rassâm (1878–1882). But it was not until two years ago, when, in January 1899, the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft* sent out an expedition under the direction of Dr. Robert Koldewey, of Gör-litz, assisted by the Assyriologist, Dr. Meissner, of Halle, and ‘Regierungsbauführer’ Andrae, that a thorough and systematic exploration was begun. Since excavations were started, on March 26th, 1899, the persevering labors of the German explorers have been crowned with signal success. Among the most interesting finds may be mentioned a stele bearing in front the image of the Hittite storm-god, and on the back a Hittite inscription;¹ and a relief representing Šamaš-reš-uçur, governor of the countries Sûkhu and Maer, in the act of worshiping the goddess Ištar and the god Adad.² At Kasr they have laid bare the famous *Street of Processions* called in the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar

¹ Since published by Dr. Koldewey in the *Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, Leipzig, 1900. Cf. L. Messerschmidt's *Corpus Inscriptionum Hettiticarum* in vol. 5 of the *Mittheilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, Berlin, 1900), p. 3, Tafel ii.

² Cf. *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 3, pp. 6 f.; 12 ff.

II (604–561 B. C.) *ā-ebur-šābū*¹ (May the enemy not prevail !), which ran along the outside of the king's palace, leading from Borsippa across the Euphrates to Babylon. On the Babylonian New Year's Day (*zagmuku*)—which feast Professor Zimmern connects with the Jewish Purim festival²—Nabû, the god of writing and patron of agriculture and science, was carried along this broad and handsomely paved street, in a magnificent ship, to pay a visit to his father Marduk, the chief of the Babylonian pantheon, the type of the sun and the symbol of spring.³ At Tell-'Amrân-ibn-Âli the German archaeologists have identified the famous temple of Marduk, *Esagila* (the house whose summit towers on high), and cleared out several of its chambers.⁴

The following important landmarks of ancient Babylon are now fixed points: *E-max* (the great house), the temple of the goddess Nin-max (the great Lady=Ištar), the goddess of fecundity and the mythical mother of Nebuchadnezzar;⁵ *Esagila*; *Imgur-Bel* (Bel has taken pity), the great wall of Babylon;⁶ and the *Street of Processions*. Inscriptions that have been found *in situ* place these identifications beyond question. To quote here only one of the inscriptions upon the stones of the pavement of the *Ā-ebur-šābū*:

¹ *Nabû-kudurri-uçur šar TIN-TIR^{ki}*

² *mâr Nabû-apal-uçur šar TIN-TIR^{ki} andku.*

³ *Sulâ Bâbil^{ki} ana šaddâxa beli rabî Marduk*

⁴ *ina libitti aban šadi ubannâ*

⁵ *tallakti Marduk bel balatam dârâ*

⁶ *şurgam*

i. e. "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon, am I. The street of Babylon I have built for

¹ Cf. Schrader's *Keilinschriftl. Bibliothek*, 3, 2, p. 21, col. v, l. 45, and Delitzsch's *Assyr. Handwörterbuch*, pp. 9^b and 637^a.

² ZAT. 11, 160; contrast Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Boston, 1898), p. 686, n. 2. See also Wildeboer's commentary on Esther (in Marti's *Hand-Commentar zum AT.*), p. 173. It might be well to state in this connection that Assyr. *puxru* was compared with Syr. چهارچهار eighteen years ago in Lyon's *Keilschrifttexte Sargon's* (Leipzig, 1883), p. 64, n. on l. 31.

³ Cf. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 127, 679.

⁴ Cf. *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 5, 6 f.; 6, 13.

⁵ Cf. *Mitth.*, 4, pp. 4 f.

⁶ Cf. *Mitth.*, 4, pp. 12, 14; 6, p. 12.

the procession in honor of the great Lord, Marduk, with stones of the mountains. O Lord Marduk, grant eternal life.¹

But the unremitting labors of the German explorers have not only been fruitful for the elucidation of history and religion. Students of the history of art, likewise, owe a debt of gratitude to the indefatigable perseverance of Dr. Koldewey and Herr Andrae for their admirable reconstruction, from hundreds of fragments of glazed tiles, of the *Lion of Babylon*.

Babylonia is the fatherland of the enameler. In Assyrian palaces enameled bricks seem to have been sparingly used. They seem to have been placed chiefly upon doorways, and, in the form of rosettes, at the springing of the battlements.² The Babylonians, however, favored by the clayey earth of the Chaldean alluvium, were not satisfied with the making of enameled bricks, but developed a new branch of decorative art. Polychromatic figures and motives were modeled in relief upon the ground, thus distinguishing them by a gentle salience as well as by color, and, at the same time, increasing both their solidity and effect. In this manner the Babylonians made up for their lack of monumental works of sculpture which was due to the difficulty of obtaining suitable material.

The Greek historian and physician at the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon (405–361 B. C.), Ctesias, who lived for a time at Babylon, thus describes the palace on the right bank of the Euphrates: In the interior of the first line of circumvallation Semiramis constructed another on a circular plan, upon which were all kinds of animals whose images were impressed on the brick while still unburnt. Nature is imitated in these figures by the use of colors.³

¹ Cf. *Mitth.* 6, pp. 5 ff.

² Cf. Loftus, *Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Susiana*, London, 1857, p. 397, n.; Perrot-Chipiez, *Art in Chaldea and Assyria* (London, 1884), I, 282.

³ Καὶ ὅν ἐν ὥμαις ἔτι ταῖς πλίνθοις διετεῖπωτο θηρία, παντοδαπὰ τῇ τῶν χρωμάτων φιλοτεχνίᾳ τὴν ἀλήθευαν ἀπομισύμενα, *Diod.* ii. 8, 4. These words of Diodorus give us a false conception of the painted decoration. The artist did not intend to imitate the real colors of nature. "The lions and bulls of the friezes had, no doubt, their effect, but yet our intelligence receives some little shock in finding them deprived of their true colors, and presented to our eyes in a kind of travesty of their real selves. Things used as ornaments have no inalienable color of their own; the decorative artist is free to twist his lines and vary his tints as he pleases; his work will be judged by the result, and as long as that is harmonious and pleasing to the eye nothing more is required." Perrot-Chipiez, *Hist. of Art in Chaldea and Assyria*, 2, pp. 296 f.

. . . . The third wall, that in the middle, was twenty stadia round . . . On its towers and their curtain-walls every sort of animal might be seen depicted according to all the rules of art, both as to form and color.¹ The whole represented a chase of various animals, these being more than four cubits high (i. e. about seven feet).² In the middle was Semiramis shooting an arrow at a panther, and, on one side, her husband Ninus at close quarters with a lion, which he transfixes with his lance." Diodorus Siculus, to whom we owe this description of Ctesias, attributes all these buildings to Semiramis, but it was the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II that Ctesias had before him.

During the years 1851–1854 the French expedition under Fulgence Fresnel and Jules Oppert collected on Tell Kasr, especially on its eastern side, a great many fragments of colored tiles. Yellow scales, separated from one another by black lines, reminded Oppert of the conventional figures by which the Assyrians represented hills, mountains, and forests. On others he saw blue undulations signifying water; on others, again, he found trees. Another class of enameled tiles represented figures of animals, the foot of a horse, and parts of a lion, especially the mane and the tail. A thick black line upon a blue ground may have been the lance of a hunter. Upon one fragment a human eye, looking full to the front, might be recognized.³ Unfortunately this interesting collection did not reach its destination. Together with the valuable antiquities collected by Victor Place, who had stripped the archway of the palace of Sargon in order to enrich his own country with the spoils of the great Assyrian king, it perished by accident in the floods of the Tigris (1855). At any rate, the description of Oppert confirms the narrative of Diodorus to which we have referred above.⁴ It must, however, be mentioned that Dr. Koldewey so far has seen nothing which could be regarded as representing mountains, trees, or water.⁵

¹ Ενησαν δὲ ἐν τοῖς πύργοις καὶ τείχεσι ζῷα παντοδαπὰ φιλοτέχνως τοῖς τε χρώμασι καὶ τοῖς τῶν τίττων ἀπομιμήμασι κατασκενασμένα, *Diod.* ii. 8, 6.

² See the Notes on Ezekiel in *The Polychrome Bible*, p. 180. Professor Haupt has pointed out that the Table of Showbread was according to Ex. 25, 23, 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, and 1½ cubits high, and that, if the Hebrew cubit = 21 inches, 1½ cubits would be equal to 31½ inches, which is the normal height of a table. Cf. Crit. Notes on Numbers (in *The Polychrome Bible*, p. 66, ll. 2 ff.).

³ Oppert, *Expédition scientifique en Mésopotamie* (Paris, 1863), pp. 143 f.

⁴ Cf. also *Mitth.*, 2, p. 4.

⁵ Cf. *Mitth.*, 3, p. 5.

But when Nebuchadnezzar mentions in his inscriptions the pictures of wild bulls and gigantic serpents adorning the gates, he can only refer, it would seem, to such colored brick or tile-reliefs.

Nothing more definite, however, about this art, the technic employed, its effect upon the spectator, and the like, could hitherto be learned in Babylonia itself.

In Assyria the palace walls were covered with a colored facing, shown by fragments found among the ruins to have been painted stucco¹ and glazed tile. It consisted of bands of ornament, rows of rosettes and anthemia, woven strap-work, conventionalized mythical animals, and other forms in set regularity.² Animals, especially lions, are given in yellow upon a blue ground.³ The largest and most important of the fragments preserved, found by Layard at Nimrud,⁴ shows a king who, returning from battle or the hunt, is about to place to his lips a bowl handed to him by a servant [according to another view he offers a drink-offering]. The bow which he holds in his left hand rests upon the earth. Behind him follow two servants, a eunuch with bow, quiver, and sword, and a warrior in short dress, with lance and pointed helmet. The garments are outlined by a broad band of yellow, thus increasing the impression of flat stiffness peculiar to the Assyrian costumes of baggy cloth without folds. A dark yellow border separates the green dress from the red background and the brownish color of the exposed flesh. White intermingles with yellow in the rosettes, fringes, swords, etc. The hair, beard, pupils of the eyes, and the sandals are black. Other fragments, published by Layard, have a green background, yellow flesh, blue garments, blue fishes, etc, all drawn with a heavy white, or, in

¹ On Assyrian painting see Perrot-Chipiez, *Art in Chaldea and Assyria*, 2, pp. 292 ff.; compare also on Assyrian and Babylonian art, Woltmann-Woermann, *Gesch. d. Malerei*, 1 (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 22 ff.; Semper, *Der Stil*² (München, 1878), §§ 67, 69–71 (pp. 250 ff.; 302 ff.), and the respective chapters in Lübke's *Gesch. d. Plastik*, Schnaase's *Gesch. d. bildenden Künste*, Reber's *Kunstgesch. d. Alterthums*. Cf. also Reber's remarks in ZA., 1, 157–160; 295–303.

² Cf. Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh* (London, 1849), first series, pl. 80.

³ Cf. Place, *Ninive et l'Assyrie* (Paris, 1866–1869), plates 29, 30, 31. Of all the animal forms, that of the lion seems to have been the first to yield material for decorative composition of any value, and even at the present day the lion has not lost its popularity in the East. Cf. Perrot-Chipiez, *Art in Chaldea and Assyria*, 1, 262.

⁴ Cf. Layard, *Monuments*, second series, pl. 55.

rare instances, brown outline. In some of the bas-reliefs found by Botta at Khorsabâd¹ red and blue alternate in the sandals of the figures, and in the harness of the horses. We find also a red bow and a blue quiver.²

But it was at Susa, the residence of the Achæmenians, that the whole splendor of this art was revealed, when Dieulafoy unearthed the famous lion-frieze which decorated the crowning of the propylæa (called *Apadâna*)³ rising in front of the palace of Darius and Xerxes.⁴ We see here, surrounded by palmettos, marguerites and similar motives, nine walking lions. "The powerful head, the thickness of the mane, the salience of the shoulder-blades and the principal muscles, every detail is distinctly marked by bold modeling, and this is further emphasized by contrast of color." These finds of Dieulafoy, more or less restored, have, since 1891, found their place in the Louvre at Paris. A fine reproduction of part of the frieze may be seen in the Metropolitan Museum at New York.⁵

Did the art of the Babylonian artists surpass that of their pupils, the Persians? And, if so, in what measure? To these questions the *Lion of Babylon* gives us the answer.⁶ Completely and exclusively restored from head to tail from the genuine pieces,⁷ it teaches indisputably that the artists of Nebuchadnezzar, at least as far as the representation of the lion is concerned, were true masters of their art. If on the Susian lion-frieze the head and the front of the lion appear too small, this cannot be

¹ Cf. Botta, *Monument de Ninive* (Paris, 1847-1850), plates 12. 14. 43. 53. 61. 62. 63. 65. 74. 76. 81. 110. 111. 113. 114. 146. 155. 156.

² On Assyrian polychromy see Perrot-Chipiez, *Art in Chaldea and Assyria*, 2, 243 ff.; and on the chemical composition of the various colors employed, *ibid.*, pp. 294 ff.; cf. Reber's remarks in ZA., I, 297-299.

³ Cf. Bezold, *Die Achämeniden-Inschriften* (Leipzig, 1888), p. 44, No. xvii, l. 8; Weissbach, *Die Achämeniden-Inschriften zweiter Art* (Leipzig, 1890), p. 84, No. iv.

⁴ Cf. Dieulafoy, *A Suse. Journal des Fouilles* (Paris, 1884-1886), pp. 132, 133.

⁵ Cf. also Perrot-Chipiez, *Art in Ancient Persia* (1892), p. 420 f.

⁶ The following description is based upon an exact polychrome reproduction of the lion by Herr Andrae, published by the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft*, and reproduced in the *American Magazine Supplement to the New York Journal and Advertiser*, Sunday, April 21, 1901, p. 9.

⁷ Cf. *Mitth.*, 3, p. 11, and the description of the lion-frieze by Prof. Delitzsch, *Mitth.* 6, pp. 13 ff.

said of the lion of Babylon. The hair of the mane and the tuft of the tail are executed, it is true, in a conventional manner, but in all other respects the animal is conceived with unusual life and naturalness. With this strong feeling for reality we find combined perfection of form. The naturalness of the work and its uniform execution give evidence of an intellectual and clear mind, and call forth a lively interest, both for the manner in which the artist extricated himself from the ban of conventional laws and for the ingenuity with which he accommodated himself to them.

The lion, as reconstructed by Koldewey and Andrae, is portrayed in its natural size, 1.95m. from the end of the forepaw to the end of the tail, and 90cm. from the top of the head to the sole of the forepaw. It is marching to the left. The bushy mane and the tuft of the tail are colored in a lustrous yellow, the locks being separated from one another by black lines; the smooth parts of the skin—back, head, legs, and tail—are white; tongue and eye yellow; eyelids and pupil black. The background is turquoise-blue. White rosettes, with orange centers, against a dark blue ground adorn the border.

A number of such lions in tile-relief appear to have formed a large frieze. Two types of lions have been found.¹ One represents a lion marching to the left—of this there must have been at least fifteen specimens—while another exhibits a lion marching to the right. Each of these types, again, occurs in two different colorings: either with a white skin and yellow mane, or with a yellow skin and a green mane; the latter being rarer than the former. Moreover, small variations exist between representatives of the same type, especially as regards the tail which in some cases presents more of a curve than in others.

The palette of the Babylonian enameler, it will be noticed, appears to have been very restricted. Compared with the Assyrian paintings, however, the walls of Babylon shone with a deeper, brighter, and more highly colored lustre than those of Nineveh.

As to the position of the frieze, Dr. Koldewey believes that the lions marching to the left had their place on the western side of the outer wall, and those marching to the right on the eastern side of the inner wall, of the *Street of Processions*. The entire series of animals was thus marching on both sides of the street toward the north.²

¹ Cf. *Mitth.*, 3, p. 10.

² Cf. *Mitth.*, 3, p. 11.

For the composition of one of these polychrome enamel reliefs a great many units were required. In order to preserve its fidelity, these separate pieces not only had to coincide exactly, but had also to be fixed and fitted with extreme nicety. Bitumen appears to have been used for the purpose of attaching them to the wall. To fit all the squares into their proper places, numbers, which have been noticed upon the uncovered faces of the crude brick walls, seem to have served for the guidance of the workmen.¹ But the proper distribution of a figure over the bricks or tiles of which it was composed, required still greater skill. To prevent any mistake, it is supposed, the artist took a large plate of soft clay, and modeled upon its surface the entire drawing in relief. Then he cut the plate into squares of the ordinary size of a brick or a tile, and marked each square with a number. These marks have been recognized upon many fragments found at Babylon by the architect Félix Thomas, who accompanied the expedition under Fresnel and Oppert.² The pigment and varnish were laid separately on each brick or tile, which was then put into the kiln and fired at an extraordinarily high temperature, till the enamel became almost like glass. At the same time the uniformity with which the various figures ever recur, constrains us to assume that the artists made use of molds.³

In this manner was composed the decoration of the buildings of Nebuchadnezzar and of Babylon, the splendor of which so impressed the imagination and provoked the anger of the Jewish prophets. It is to paintings of this kind that Ezekiel alludes⁴ when he rebukes Jerusalem, under the name of Aholibah, for its infidelity and its adoption of foreign superstitions: She saw men portrayed on walls, figures of Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion, their loins girded with sashes, their heads adorned with fillets, looking all of them like captains, portraits of Babylonians,—Chaldea was the land of their nativity.⁵

¹ Cf. Place, *Ninive*, 1, p. 258.

² Cf. *Expéd. scient.*, 1, pp. 143 f.; Place, *Ninive*, 2, p. 253; *Mitth.*, 3, p. 10. Loftus also has copied and published a number of marks of the same kind which he had found upon glazed bricks from the palace of Susa (*Travels and Researches*, p. 398).

³ Cf. Koldewey in the *Mitth.*, 3, p. 5; Delitzsch, *Mitth.*, 6, p. 16.

⁴ Semper (*Der Stil*, 1, p. 54) holds that the words of Ezekiel refer to tapestry; cf. Reber in *ZA.*, 1, 290 ff.

⁵ Professor Toy's translation of Ezekiel 23, 14, 15 in *The Polychrome Bible* (New York, 1899).